

Statement of the Board of Directors of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) on the Great Ape Protection Act

Approved by the AAAS Board of Directors
25 April 2009

The American Association for the Advancement of Science has long recognized and supported the responsible use of animals in research, including essential biomedical research that can lead to prevention, treatments, and cures for human and animal diseases. In its 1990 joint Board and Council Resolution on the Use of Animals in Research, Testing, and Education, AAAS reiterated its support for the use of animals in scientific research, while also strongly urging scientists to act responsibly when studying animals.

Because of the unique role that studies of chimpanzees play in assuring continuing medical progress, AAAS opposes the Great Ape Protection Act of 2009 (H.R. 1326). This legislation would prohibit virtually all biomedical research on chimps and other

great apes. Chimpanzees are essential to many areas of biomedical research, for example, in the development of a vaccine and treatment for hepatitis C. Chimpanzees are the only non-human species susceptible to this disease, which affects approximately four million people in the United States, with 35,000 new cases each year. They are also necessary in the development of monoclonal antibodies to treat such diseases as cancer and autoimmune disorders. Additionally, chimpanzees are needed in research to develop defenses against emerging infectious diseases that affect not only humans, but chimpanzees in the wild as well.

Existing laws and regulations strictly protect the welfare of chimpanzees. Research using animals in the United States

is conducted under stringent regulations and inspections by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Institutes of Health. In addition, laboratories using animals in research voluntarily submit to inspection by the nongovernmental Association for the Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (of which AAAS is a member). These regulations already require that researchers ensure that the physical and psychological wellbeing of non-human primates meet the highest standards.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) is the world's largest general scientific society, and publisher of the international journal, *Science*. AAAS was founded in 1848. It has nearly 130,000 individual members and 262 affiliated societies and academies of science, serving 10 million individuals worldwide.

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